

What is claimed is:

1. A method of interpreting data input to an electronic form-based data entry system, including:
 - 5 receiving movement data from a moveable input device, the movement data associated with a particular field of an electronic form;
determining one or more possible variables of information content in the movement data by applying at least one handwriting algorithm to the movement data;
determining a preferred variable of the information content by utilising at least one
10 parameter associated with the particular field of the electronic form.
2. A method of interpreting data input to an electronic form-based data entry system, including:
 - 15 receiving movement data from a moveable input device, the movement data associated with a particular field of an electronic form;
limiting the types of possible variables of information content in the movement data by utilising at least one parameter associated with the particular field of the electronic form;
determining a preferred variable of the information content, from the limited types
20 of possible variables of information content, in the movement data by applying at least one handwriting algorithm to the movement data.
3. The method as claimed in either claim 1 or 2, wherein determining the preferred variable of the information content utilises a probability value assigned to each of the
25 possible variables of information content.
4. The method as claimed in either claim 1 or 2, wherein determining the preferred variable of the information content is performed contemporaneously with receiving the movement data.
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5. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the moveable input device is a pen-like device.

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6. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein determining the possible variables of information content utilises stroke information contained within the movement data.
- 5 7. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the particular field of the electronic form is associated with a pre-defined dictionary of possible variables of information content, the dictionary being used in determining the preferred variable of the information content.
- 10 8. The method as claimed in claim 7 wherein, certain entries in the dictionary are assigned a higher probability of being the preferred variable of the information content.
9. The method as claimed in either of claims 7 or 8, wherein the particular field of the electronic form is a name field and the dictionary includes an indication of gender
15 associated with selected names.
10. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the particular field of the electronic form is an address field having sub-fields arranged hierarchically such that the preferred variable of the information content in a sub-field may be used to
20 constrain possible variables of information content in another sub-field.
11. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the particular field of the electronic form is a telephone number field and the possible variables of information content are constrained to include only numerals.
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12. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the particular field of the electronic form is a credit card number field and the possible variables of information content are constrained to include only a fixed number of numerals, the numerals being further verifiable by use of a checksum.
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13. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the particular field of the electronic form is from the set including: zip/post code; country; date; email address; or language.

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14. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the electronic form is implemented using one of the standardized file formats: HTML, XML, PDF or XForms.

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15. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein a custom validation program is associated with the particular field of the electronic form, the custom validation program being executed based on determination of a particular variable of the information content.

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16. The method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the custom validation program is a JavaScript program.

17. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein a field mask is associated with the particular field of the electronic form, the field mask used to check that a possible variable of information content conforms with a predefined string pattern.

18. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein a possible variable of information content is derived from a selection list, or combination list, involving previously determined preferred variables.

19. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the electronic form is a paper-based interface provided with coded markings.

20. The method as claimed in claim 19, wherein the coded markings are a pattern of infrared markings.

21. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the moveable input device is an optically imaging pen.

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22. The method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein each electronic form is uniquely identified and stored on a network server.

23. A method of enabling users to enter information content into an electronic form-based data entry system, the method including the steps of:

providing a user with an electronic form, the electronic form having disposed therein or thereon coded data indicative of a particular field of the electronic form and of at least one reference point of the electronic form;

receiving in a computer system indicating data from a sensing device, operated by the user, regarding the identity of the electronic form and at least one of a position and a movement of the sensing device relative to the electronic form; and,

determining a preferred value of the information content from the indicating data by utilising at least one parameter associated with the particular field of the electronic form;

wherein the sensing device comprises:

(a) an image sensor adapted to capture images of at least some of the coded data when the sensing device is placed in an operative position relative to the electronic form; and

(b) a processor adapted to:

(i) identify at least some of the coded data from one or more of the captured images;

(ii) decode at least some of the coded data; and

(iii) generate the indicating data using at least some of the decoded coded data.

24. The method as claimed in claim 23, wherein the particular field of the electronic form is associated with at least one zone of the electronic form, and the method includes identifying, in the computer system and from the at least one zone, the at least one parameter.